

A curious epidemic of severe illness and death has broken out in the top leadership of world communism since the death of Stalin on March :

- On 14 March - Klement Gottwald, died of , his condition possibly aggravated by the trip to Stalin's funeral; he had been ill over a year.

- ~~For~~ On March rep

Pick -

- There have been reports that Molotov appeared grey & strained & in visibly bad health at the time of Stalin's funeral, although he is reportedly improved in appearance at the Supreme Soviet meeting on 15 March.

- And then, on 17 March, French papers reported that French Communists, returning from Stalin's funeral, brought back reports that Maurice Thorez, who has been in the USSR for his health for nearly two years, had suffered a relapse and was in serious condition.